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C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 000094

STATE FOR EUR/RPM AND SCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/14/2019
TAGS: PREL MARR MOPS AF NZ
SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND WEIGHS AFGHANISTAN ASKS REQUEST

REF: STATE 31102

Classified By: Acting DCM Margaret McKean, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) On April 8, Acting DCM and DATT met with Ministry of Defense and Ministry (MOD) of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) officials to present the overview of requested needs and specific asks for New Zealand. (Note: The Charge d'Affaires had earlier presented the list to MFAT Deputy Secretary Mike Green and Americas Desk Deputy Director Elizabeth Halliday on April 6 so that MFAT would have the list before New Zealand Foreign Minister McCully's April 7 meeting with the Secretary in Washington. End Note). MOD officials explained that the GNZ is reviewing its contribution to Afghanistan in light of the new USG approach to Afghanistan and Pakistan and the call for the international community to do more to support both countries.

Although the review was to be concluded by the end of the June, MOD and MFAT officials agreed that the process could be accelerated and will keep us informed.

¶2. (C) On encouraging the Japanese to provide more support in Afghanistan, MOD officials noted that the GNZ has continued to raise Afghanistan in Japan-NZ bilateral discussions but to little avail. The GNZ has concluded that Japan's defense forces hide behind GOJ constitutional limitations because -- in GNZ opinion -- Japan's security forces lack self confidence and worry they may not be able to perform adequately in international security operations. New Zealand has also discussed Afghanistan with the Malaysian government over the last 12 months but has not had a great deal of success. The Malaysian government agreed to deploy to the Gulf of Aden to protect commercial vessels from pirates but only after being shamed into it by the presence of Chinese and Korean vessels. Chinese business leaders in Malaysia complained, said MOD officials, and the Malaysian government was forced to respond in kind. New Zealand will not have further opportunities for high-level dialogue with the Malaysians until the end of the year.

¶3. (C) Post will continue to engage with the GNZ on Afghanistan and report the results of the government's internal review of its Afghanistan commitment when it has been concluded.

KEEGAN